

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 186.

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1867.

PRICE 1^d.

'OUR LEADING COLUMNS.'

EVERY man, we are told, imagines himself competent to drive a gig, stir a fire, and write a leading article. Of the two former accomplishments, I cannot say much. As I have never pretended to possess them myself, I shall not attempt to impart them to others; but the third is an accomplishment which is so mysterious in the eyes of the uninitiated, and at the same time appears to the presumptuous to be of such easy acquirement, that 'a leader-writer' can hardly fail to interest somebody if he attempts a faithful exposition of the sublime mysteries of his craft.

The 'leader,' as it now appears in the full glories of long-primer in our morning and evening journals, is, it need hardly be said, an essentially modern creation. The man who takes up a volume of the *Times* or the *Morning Chronicle* for one of the early years of the present century, will be sadly disappointed if he expects to find in either anything resembling the articles which are now provided for him every day. A few bald lines of summary, and a stilted and ungrammatical sentence feebly echoing the gossip of the town, are all that he will find in the columns which are now filled with essays often of remarkable literary ability, and almost always written with force, clearness, and elegance. But it has been by long years of slow and weary progress that the editorial 'we' has attained its present position; and even now there are but few persons—beyond the limited number behind the scenes—who have any adequate idea of the combination of industry and talent which has daily to be put in force in order to produce the leading columns of a London morning newspaper.

The great blunder of the newspaper reader is in supposing that there is such a being as an actual owner of the 'we,' who is alone allowed to use it, and who is the author of all the articles in which it makes its appearance in any particular newspaper. The truth is, that the 'we' is a literal fact, and not, as most people suppose, a mere figment invented for the purpose of giving dignity and emphasis to an individual expression of opinion.

With hardly an exception, the leading articles of the London press, and especially those dealing with the more important political topics of the day, are the work not of one single person, but of an association of gentlemen, combined for the purpose, almost all of whom have had some hand in the dish which is finally set before the public. These gentlemen are the leader-writers of the press, and the position they hold is a very curious and anomalous one. They are not editors—an editor may be a leader-writer also, though even that is not always the case; but the ordinary leader-writer has no pretensions to the superior dignity. And whilst they rank beneath the editor-in-chief, they place an immeasurable gulf between themselves and his lieutenant the sub-editor, who perhaps comes nearer to the popular notion of what a newspaper editor is than any other member of the staff. The 'sub' is regarded by the leader-writer as a mere paste-and-scissors man, and is accordingly treated by him with an amount of contempt, to which, I am bound to say, he is very seldom entitled. The leader-writer has nothing to do with the internal management of the office in which he is engaged; except on rare occasions, he knows scarcely anything of the news which the sub-editor is gathering in from all quarters of the globe for the next morning's issue; and he has only a limited voice in directing the policy of the journal to which he is attached—a policy to which he is not unfrequently personally opposed. What, then, are his special functions?

I cannot better answer the question than by describing the manner in which, every day in the week, the leaders of an ordinary morning journal are produced. Scene the first opens in the 'consultation room' in the newspaper office in the city. The time is an hour after noon, and the persons of the drama are some half-dozen gentlemen, of various ages. There is a poet, whose works have never sold; a novelist, who is happy in being able to command the respect of publishers; the son of a peer, who was once in a cavalry regiment; a barrister, who finds leaders bring him more guineas than he gets from his briefs; a literary

Bohemian, who has travelled over half the world, and who has seen everything, from the inside of Whitecross Street Prison to the Kremlin at Moscow; and a leader-writer pure and simple, whose name has never been heard outside one or two quiet clubs off the Strand, but who is every day helping to mould the opinions of the public, and whose influence on them it is difficult to over-estimate. Gathered together around a table, the little company so formed is presided over by the nominal editor of the journal. He may be a man who writes constantly himself, but it is just as likely that he never writes at all.

The first business to be gone through consists of a choice of subjects for the articles for the next day; and this, perhaps, is the most difficult part of the whole matter. Only those who have had to go on writing day after day for months and years together, and who every morning have had to find some new topic on which to discourse, can have any notion of the difficulty which the necessity of making such a choice presents. When parliament is up, and the dull season in full swing, leader-writers are driven almost to distraction in their search for 'something new.' How they scan the columns of despised 'local prints,' and how eagerly they dart upon the smallest paragraph, the most trumpery police case, that seems likely to afford a text for a social leader of the humorous or pathetic sort! On one occasion, a leader-writer of my acquaintance was told to write upon anything he liked, the editor informing him in despair that the only subject he could give him was—Nothing! He took the hint, and actually wrote a leader upon the difficulty of finding subjects to comment upon in those sleepy August days when all the town was holiday-making. This was making bricks without straw with a vengeance.

On another occasion, a well-known writer received as his portion a text so infinitely small that he felt everything must depend upon his own ingenuity. He sat down, cudgelled his brains for a couple of hours, and finally produced a smart and lively article, the only fault of which was, that it did not contain the slightest allusion to the subject to which it was supposed to refer, and consequently left the reader in a state of hopeless bewilderment as to the reason for the expenditure of so much wit and learning.

But let us suppose, in the present instance, that parliament is sitting, and the Reform debates, say, at their height. There is therefore no dearth of subjects, and very quickly the editor's secretary or assistant has his sheet filled with the various topics suggested. These are: Mr Beales (M.A.) and Mr Walpole; The London Conference on the Luxemburg Question; Italian Finance; The Trades' Union Commission; The Tailors' Strike; The Last Case of Justices' Justice. But here are six subjects, and at the most but four leaders are wanted, only three of which will in all probability be used. So the weeding-out process has to begin. 'Italian Finance won't suffer by being kept over for a day; put it down for to-morrow,' says the editor. 'Tailors' Strike: ah, Thompson wrote on that last week; it's too soon to be at it again.'

There then remain four questions to be considered, and over these the battle-royal begins. First

comes the great cause of Beales (M.A.) *versus* Walpole. Four members of the council think as badly of Beales (M.A.) as of Walpole, and say so in the plainest terms. One is full of sympathy for the Home Secretary, and earnestly pleads his cause against the bullies of the Reform League. Two others, however, are just as enthusiastic on behalf of the ex-revising barrister. The discussion which takes place is at least as warm as that which is subsequently held in 'the House,' and it is enlivened by a capital anecdote from our Bohemian, of which each gentleman present mentally makes a note, for use in future leaders. Finally, the question is settled by the majority of votes, and it is decided that a castigation shall be administered equally to the Reform League and the government in the leader which is to be devoted to the exciting subject. Then the editor hastily sketches in a dozen lines the tone of the article as it has been decided upon by the council, and gives the paper to one of the members of the triumphant majority. About the next question—the Luxemburg Conference—there is not much to be said. The editor and one of the leader-writers have almost all the talking to themselves, and the latter gentleman receives orders to take the subject and 'make what he can of it.' The Trades' Union Commission is the subject of quite an angry debate between the two principal political economists of the party, one of whom is madly enamoured of Mr Ruskin's ideas, whilst the other pins his faith to Mr Mill. As—to use the slang of the profession—Ruskin's theories 'won't wash,' the Trades' Union leader is given into the hands of Mr Mill's disciple, whose face has grown quite red in the heat of the discussion. There only remains the case of the little boy who has got three months' hard labour for stealing a turnip, and before the debate upon this subject begins, our Bohemian, who has discreetly held his tongue during the discussion of the two previous topics, tells a story so ludicrous and appropriate, that even the political economists shake their sides with laughter, and the council with one consent devolve upon the story-teller the duty of scarifying Dogberry. The last business is to appoint some one to go down to the House of Commons in the evening to hear the debate, and, if necessary, to write upon it; and this having been done, the council breaks up.

Then the leader-writers commence their afternoon's labour, whilst those who have escaped writing for that day make their way westward to their clubs or homes. Some of the chosen stay in the office, and write there; others slip along to quiet chambers in Brick Court, and write as Penderennis or Warrington might have done, undisturbed, save by the whistling of some idle lad on the pavement beneath their windows. By five, or, at latest, by six o'clock, their task must be completed. 'The leader then is finished, I suppose?' says my reader. Not so, my friend. The leader, as yet, is but rough-hewn, and has still to be shaped by the divinity which presides over every modern journal. But first of all it has to be set in the bold clear type in which the finished article subsequently appears. Then, when set, the 'reading' commences. First, it is read for mere errors of the press, all of which are corrected with scrupulous care. Then the 'revise,' as the second proof is called, is given to the chief reader, who must be a man of education and intelligence. He reads it for 'the sense.' Any grammatical blunders—and of such blunders there

are not a few—are corrected: sometimes the careless writer has omitted a word in the middle of a sentence, or has left it otherwise imperfect, and all such defects have to be remedied; the classical and historical allusions are carefully verified, for nothing looks worse than a blunder in one of these; and if there is any obscurity in any particular passage, it is marked in such a manner as to call the attention of the next reader to the doubtful sentence.

By eight o'clock, all this work has been done, and a final proof of the leader, printed on a great sheet of paper, which leaves a margin seven inches wide on either side of the type, is ready for the hands of the editor. Then he again comes upon the scene, and with him a new character—the revising editor. These two, sitting opposite each other at the desk, set themselves down to three hours' hard work. The leaders are carefully read, compared with each other, and with previous articles on the same subjects, and altered and revised as the judgment of the editor may direct. Very frequently, this revision amounts almost to the re-writing of the article; and sometimes the original writer fails to recognise a single sentence of his own composition in it as it appears the next morning. Seldom, indeed, does it escape without some alteration, generally made at the very parts which the author of the article is most anxious to preserve intact. To a young writer, nothing is more annoying than this system of revision; he revolts against it as the mothers of Egypt revolted against the slaughter of their first-born. But no expressions of disgust or indignation have any effect upon the ruthless editor; and should the victim complain of the manner in which his productions are treated, he is most probably told that he has been paid for what he wrote, and that he has no longer any interest in or control over an article which has become the property of another. Indeed, it is hard to see how, under our present system of leader-writing, this revision could be avoided. If every writer signed his articles, the case would be different; but where all the articles in one journal are put forth as emanating from the same source, it is absolutely necessary to secure their consistency by a severe and rigorous system of revision and alteration. Whether the anonymous system is an advantage or not, is a question upon which I do not pretend to enter here. Of the extent of the alterations made by the editor and his colleague in the leader before it is allowed to go forth to the world, some idea may be gained from the fact, that the corrections in the type rendered necessary by these alterations cost the proprietors of one daily newspaper alone a thousand pounds a year!

It will thus be seen that the leader has to go through almost as many processes as a needle before it is fit for the eyes of the reader; and that its authorship is divided among many different hands or heads. There are, of course, exceptional cases, in which men who have attained high positions on the press are allowed to write their own thoughts in their own language; and on the provincial press, where, in general, only one leader-writer is employed, and where the audience appealed to is not so critical as that before which a London newspaper must appear, the writer usually has much greater scope and freedom than his brother of the metropolis. But the process I have described is that

which, with various modifications, takes place daily in the offices of our leading morning journals, and without which we should not have 'Our Leading Columns' to instruct and interest us.

THE MAGIC SALMON-PONDS.

THE wonder of the age is Pisciculture. Are you connected with a salmon-river? If so, capture one or two well-grown fish, despoil them of milt and ova, scatter the eggs into a few gravel-filled boxes, let the water flow over them, wait till they grow into table-salmon, and lo, you have a fortune! But let the work be done systematically; and, speaking by the card, I will tell the reader how it can be done, for I have just been visiting a place where fortune is being wooed through salmon-culture. I allude to Stormontfield on the river Tay, where there is a model suite of breeding-boxes and ponds for the nurture of young salmon; it is a place where they sow salmon-eggs like pease, and where the pease expand into living fish. Stormontfield is not altogether unknown to the readers of this *Journal*, for it was described in these pages seven years ago; but since that time, more and more wonders have been achieved; the breeding-boxes have been augmented, another pond has been added to the suite, and in consequence, the rental of the river Tay has risen by nine thousand pounds! The whole philosophy of pisciculture is found in the protection that is afforded to the eggs and the young fish. Although a female salmon is a very fecund animal, yielding, in the aggregate, a thousand eggs for every pound of her weight, it was at one time thought that the enemies of the salmon, human and inhuman, would ultimately exterminate that fish, which has been not inaptly designated the 'venison of the waters.' It has been calculated that, in the natural way of its wandering life, only one salmon-egg out of each thousand ever arrives at the stage of reproducing its kind. What becomes, then, of the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine eggs? The proportion of eggs that never hatch is very large, and the proportion of young fish annually destroyed by their ever-watchful enemies is equally great. A twenty-pound salmon yields, as a general rule, twenty thousand eggs, but as only twenty of that number arrive at maturity, the total waste of embryo fish-life in a large salmon-river must therefore be enormous. A gentleman, the proprietor of a fine salmon-fishery in Ireland, once deposited seventy thousand salmon ova in a beautifully clear stream for hatching; but when the time had arrived for the vivifying of the eggs, it was found that the whole of them had been eaten by the dragon-fly. Out of that immense number of ova, not one living fish was obtained!

A sketch of the natural spawning, as compared with the artificial system, will best illustrate the advantage of pisciculture. Let us suppose, then, that a twenty-pound female salmon is busy on the 'redds' about the middle of November, the water running furiously all the time. The fish has been at work for a day or two making a nest, by ploughing up the gravel, and two or three male fish have, during the whole time, been fighting, and watching, and swimming around; meanwhile, the ova are rapidly floating away in hundreds down the stream, two-thirds of them never touched by the vivifying milt. A brace of jack are lying in an eddy, feasting on the eggs;

while we can see a bull-trout carried away by the force of the stream, so gorged with the toothsome dainty as to be quite unable to offer any resistance to the current; then, on a deep pool below, two or three water-hens are busy gobbling up all the eggs that escape from the previous depredators; so that out of the twenty thousand eggs that fall from the fish, barely a fifth settle down in the spawning-trough; and whilst these four thousand eggs are about coming to life, a resistless March flood carries away both bed and eggs, leaving most of the latter upon places where they can never come to life; indeed, when the 'spate' exhausts itself, they will be found lying high and dry upon the grass, the germ within dead, or likely to prove unfruitful. Of the thousand eggs that are left in their watery nest, the greater portion will no doubt yield fish; but before they are many days old, scores of the tiny animals are killed, and long ere the remainder are seized with the sea-going instinct, only a small shoal remains, and very few of these, after their visit to the great deep—although they are becoming more and more able to protect themselves—ever return to the parental stream, so numerous are the enemies that lie in wait for them. The fishes of the sea and rivers, it has been said, provide their own food; shoals of one kind of fish seem to have been created to live solely upon another kind. A large salmon-river is a scene of boundless destruction, and, as the Ettrick Shepherd said: 'The carnage is truly awful.'

By the Stormontfield plan of artificial nursing and protected growing, the percentage of loss, either in eggs or fish, is trivial when compared with the alarming sacrifice which has just been described; a day at a Stormontfield spawning-bout has taught us that. At the proper season, after the fish have mounted to their spawning-beds, on some gloomy, gray November day, when the river is swollen by a more than usual flow of water, and numbers of the largest fish are certain to be seeking a spawning-place, Peter Marshall, the local genius of the ponds, and his assistant manipulators, launch their boat, and we all go out upon the river in search of 'milters' and 'spawners.' We find many fine fish, but few of them are in exact condition for our purpose. We bag one or two nearly ripe ones, and place them in an adjoining mill-race, which Peter has converted into a 'lying-in hospital,' and there they are detained till their eggs are fully mature. This is a necessary expedient, as it is not easy at all times to find ripe fish. At length, after a good deal of fatigue, we obtain three fine female salmon and two milters, which Peter pronounces to be in prime condition. We pull ashore; and the boxes being reached, the eggs are shelled out into a tub of water, just like so many pease, the remarkable feature of the process being, that not one of the eggs is lost, or escapes being fecundated by the milt. The ova is tenderly washed, and then the milt is poured over it, the whole being gently stirred together. During the process, the fish are kept in oblong tin-boxes, with just enough of water to keep them afloat. After being deprived of their spawn, which is a very brief process, the old fish are let away into the river, and swim off with great alacrity.

The forty thousand eggs—I will suppose that to be the number obtained from the three fish—are again slightly washed, and then carefully sown among the gravel of the breeding-boxes; and in about one hundred and twenty days—for the Stormontfield boxes

are exposed to the natural temperature of the seasons—they will begin to hatch out; and so certain is the plan, that only a very few hundreds of the batch will be found to have perished. It is interesting to watch the progress of the ova; for perhaps thirty days, no change can be noted in the egg, at least with the naked eye; after that time, a faint prefiguration of the future salmon can be discerned, which, day by day, becomes more distinct. By and by, the eyes begin to glare through the transparent shell; but at first, there is no speculation in them, although we can see that they belong to an animal, for anon, the thread-like tracings reveal to us a skeleton form, which rapidly covers itself with flesh; and lo! the fragile prison bursts, and the little ungainly fish sallies into the outer world, naked and timid, and burdened with the remains of the shell from whence it came. At Stormontfield, the tiny fish, as soon as they are able to swim, have their pretty little pond to repair to, where they are carefully fed on boiled liver and other dainties, including maggots from dead-meat hung over the ponds on strings. The fry—parr, they are now named—are carefully watched and protected from all enemies for the first twelve months of their life, at which period, a moiety of them will, by various signs, demand their freedom, and be sent away to the sea, where they will grow into grilse with magical rapidity.

It is curious to observe that in a month or two after the fish come to life, half of the quantity hatched begins to outgrow the other half with great rapidity, so that, at the end of a year, one half of the brood having become *smolts*—that is, scaled fish, are ready to proceed to the sea, and are tolerably well able to take care of themselves. The remainder of the fish are very small, and are known as *parr* (a name which was given to them when they were thought to be a distinct fish, and not the young of the salmon): *they will remain another year in the ponds before they become coated with the scales of the smolt, and are able to follow their sisters and brothers to the salt water.* This discrepancy in the growth of the salmon is a curious but unexplained anomaly in salmon-life—one half of every brood of that fish remains in the ponds for two years, the other half having assumed the migratory dress at a little over one year after the date of their birth. No naturalist has been able to give a reason for this curious feature of salmon-growth. Some observers say it is owing to the temperament of the fish—some being clever and active, obtain a larger portion of food, and by consequence, grow more rapidly than the animals which are timid and unable to look after 'number one.' Again, it has been said that it is owing to the imperfect milting of some of the eggs, and that the fish of rapid growth are from those eggs which have come first in contact with the milt. I suspect, however, that Lord Dundreary would be able to give the best explanation of the matter, for 'it is one of those things which no fellow can understand.'

The change from the parr condition to the smolt condition of salmon-life is rapidly made when once nature gives the signal. The ponds may be visited one day when the fish will be all parrs, little things with the finger-marks down their sides; but at next visit—after, perhaps, the lapse of a week—thousands of them will be leaping with impatience to get out of their place of confinement into the river, and so onward to the

sea. Mr Buist, the conservator of the Tay, could not believe his eyes at the rapidity with which this change took place. During the first year of the ponds, a party examined the fish, and seeing they were still parr, it was resolved to keep them in the pond for another year, but a few days after, the evidence of the desired change was unmistakable. 'It was like magic,' said Peter Marshall; 'and so we sent the fish away to the sea.'

As has already been indicated, the great value of the system pursued at Stormontfield is the protection it affords to the young fish at a time when they are so feeble as to be totally unable to protect themselves. It is surprising how few of the eggs are wasted in the protected breeding-boxes. Out of the forty thousand ova assumed as having been laid down, not above two thousand, which is a very small percentage, fail to ripen into fish, which by the natural system would very likely be the total of all that hatched. Under the protective system, the percentage of full-grown fish may rise to ten in a hundred instead of one in a thousand, for the salmon, if it can only escape the numerous perils of its earlier days, is, when it has grown a bit, better able to protect itself than almost any other fish, as any man who has ever hooked and landed a twenty-pound fish will testify.

A large salmon-farmer, who is the proprietor of a fine stream in County Galway in Ireland, where he has carried out extensive plans for the benefit of the parent fish, and introduced them, by the cutting of passes through rocky barriers, to new head-waters, is a great believer in the artificial system, for he too has a suite of magic hatching-boxes. It is information supplied by him that gives value to the following statement: The eggs obtained from the parent fish, he knows, from fifteen years' practical experience, may be fecundated and incubated in a box more perfectly, and in greater relative numbers, than when left to chance in the bed of a river; and by using filtered water, as is done at Stormontfield, the destructive insects, as well as the trout and larger fish, may be to a great extent excluded during the period of protection. After the age of fifteen months, when the young fish are placed in the river, and go to and return from the sea, during which journeys we obtain our relative proportions of marketable fish, the question arises, From which system, the natural or artificial, can we derive the largest quantity of table-salmon at the least relative numerical cost? Let us of course remember that we have a migratory animal to deal with. The ova may be nursed into life, and the young salmon be protected for a few months; but at the end of the period of protection, when the fish are let away, they become exposed to the same chances of hurt as the millions of others which are going to and returning from the sea. A salmon, it is said, must twice visit the salt water before it is fit for the table; therefore, out of the four years of its average life it can be protected for only a few months—in the case of half the fish of a brood, for fifteen months; and for the other half, a little over two years. I shall not at present enter into the minutiae of salmon-commerce, but it would be interesting to consider the pounds, shillings, and pence of the artificial system. Given four hundred thousand eggs laid down at an expense of about sixty pounds, the question comes to be, How many of these eggs will reach, say, the state of twenty-pound fish? If only five in each hundred do so, that will of course

be two thousand fish; and as to price, these may be estimated all over at a pound sterling each—yielding, therefore, a sum of two thousand pounds. As the largest mortality in salmon-life occurs during the infancy of the fish, it is not too much to assume that five per cent. of the well-protected parrs will attain to the condition assumed.

Various questions in the natural history of the salmon have been determined by the wonder-working salmon-ponds. It has been proved that the eggs of the salmon produce parr, that parr change into smolts, that smolts become grilse, and that grilse become salmon; and yet at one time all these conditions of salmon-life afforded matter for grave and learned disputation. One of the wonders disclosed by the artificial system is the rapidity as well as the anomaly of salmon-growth. One portion of a family of salmon may be disporting in the Stormontfield ponds under the kindly protection of Peter Marshall, fishes scarce an ounce in weight, and of corresponding size; while another portion may be returning from the salt water, salmon weighing four pounds, well-grown and shapely fishes, many of which are captured and sent to table—which is not right, seeing that they are only grilse. Whenever it gains the sea, the little smolt can revel and gorge itself in water that abounds with food, so that, with its rapid digestive power, it grows and gets fat as quickly as if it were an aquatic alderman living on turtle-soup and fins of turbot. All kinds of odd experiments as to the development and growth of the salmon have been tried in the magic breeding-boxes at Stormontfield. The eggs of the largest fish have been milted by the smallest parr, and with no visible ill effect on the growth of the offspring; they grew and became smolts the same as the other produce of the ponds. Again, female salmon have been crossed with a male grilse, but with no particularity of growth: the same anomaly as to youthful changes distinguished the young fish in both instances; only the half of them changed to smolts in the first year, as before. An old Tay fisher whom I have met has a theory that salmon-life evolves in biennial stages: half of a shoal of parr only go to sea the first year, and half of these remain in the salt water for two seasons; and so on with the grilse and the salmon in a circle for ever. In short, the natural history of the salmon has as yet been very imperfectly investigated, and theories are sometimes promulgated just to hide the ignorance of those who invent them.

LORD ULSWATER.

CHAPTER LIX.—THE OLD LETTERS ARE UNTIED.

THE Manxman's time, since he came down from London to the pleasant little bathing-place of Shellton-on-Sea, had not been wasted. He knew no one, and no one knew him. An artist has opportunities of picking up information which are denied to the members of most professions. A surveyor, a lawyer, or a capitalist, making inquiry concerning some local magnate, is sure to find that his inquisitiveness makes the natives as inquisitive as himself. Does he wish to run a railway through Sir John's park? it is pointedly asked; or is his business with the squire's acres and habits likely to end in a Chancery suit, or an application to Sir James Wilde? Is the stranger able and

willing to buy poor Lord Lackland's castle? the present noble owner of which lives in two rooms of it, much as a mouse inhabits a cheese; and if so, will the grand old Norman pile be converted into a mad-house, a monster hotel, or a colossal cold-water-curing establishment? But an artist, who is regarded by the unartistic world very much in the light of a harmless lunatic, may pry and question as he will, without being suspected of an eye to anything worse than a desire to paint a picture, or to sell one. Therefore, Sark, in his velvet coat and hat of soft felt, was able to learn more of Lord Ulswater and his ways than the best detective within the bills of mortality could have gleaned together in so short a time. Even those visits to Clackley Common and Nixon's Hut, whereof rumour darkly whispered, were mentioned to the wandering sketcher; and those who told of them were little aware that the auditor could give a better guess than the narrator at the real solution of the enigma. The Professor had at last communicated to his ally the fact that the murderer of Stephen Marsh was no other than William Huller, his, Brum's, nephew, no doubt acting in the interest of Lord Ulswater; and James Sark could easily divine that this bravo lay lurking at Nixon's Hut, out of the way of all ordinary scrutiny. But Bendigo Bill's safety, if possible, had been stipulated for by his old uncle, who was of the old Scottish opinion that blood was thicker than water.

And this is the time to mention a singular dream that haunted Lord Ulswater in his feverish sleep, once, twice, and thrice, and would not be driven away by the exorcisms of a disciplined intellect. John Carnac's sleep, from boyhood up to a very recent time, had been sweet and refreshing, just the sound sleep that belongs theoretically to perfect health and a stainless conscience. His dreams had always been pleasant ones, not vivid strongly marked visions, but airy trifles that burst like foam-bells dancing down the stream, and leave no trace behind.

This dream was of another warp and woof, no air-spun tissue of fairy pageantry, but a drear web woven of black threads from the Valky's spindle. It was such a scene from the shadow-world as might have haunted some old heathen ancestor of the Carnac stock, besetting him when his blood was growing cold and his step slow, and his notched battle-axe and dinted shield hung from the rafters of the hall, and the battered ship in which the pirate had floated up river and creek was a sun-cracked wreck upon the beach of the sea-shore. A grim dream.

Lord Ulswater dreamed that he was standing alone in the dried-up bed of a mountain torrent. The water-course was quite dry, and the stones of it sparkled and shone like the jewels of a monarch's crown, in the slanting sunlight. And well might this be so, for every pebble was a precious gem glittering gloriously, and the sands were yellow gold-dust, yielding softly to the tread. Then the dreamer stooped, covetous, and laded himself with a rich burden of the precious stones that lay at his feet, every gem worth a king's ransom. As he picked up the last of them, he heard a low dull roar, like the roll of far-off thunder, growing louder and louder, nearer and nearer, and he knew that the flood was sweeping down upon him, and that he must flee or perish. But he could not flee; his feet refused to obey his will. Rooted to the

ground he stood, powerless, motionless, with his massive load of useless treasure, and could not stir from the spot, for all his fears.

Then it came, the roaring, leaping flood, and was upon him with all its waves. Horror! it was not water, but blood, red and warm. It was a stream of blood that hissed in his ears, and bathed his shuddering limbs, and rose and rose, rioting, above his breast, higher and higher, till only his head was above the gory flood, and then his strength came back, and he fought for life, striving to reach the bank. He was a strong swimmer. How the heavy heap of jewels bore him down! With a shriek, he let them fall into the red stream, fighting on, straining every nerve, gaining the bank so nearly, that one more effort would place him in safety. What cruel hand is that that drags him down? A woman's hand, cold, clammy to the touch, the hand of one that was dead. A poor little hand, with white fingers cut and gashed by the knife, rose up above the tide to grapple with him as he struggled, and a woman's long dark hair floated up to the surface, and he, loathing and in agonies of fear, was dragged and drawn down beneath the red flood, to meet the dead face of Loys rising from the depths, close to his; and the torture of that dreadful thing was more than he could bear, and with a smothered cry he awoke, gasping.

It was a frightful vision of the night that awaited John Carnac when he laid him down to sleep, and sleep grew hateful to him, and the earth a place of pain, and his hell had begun for him while the evil he had done was yet new. Meanwhile, his enemy, thirsting and hungering for vengeance, dogged him like his shadow, following his steps, either in the spirit or in the body, and stanch as a sleuth-hound to the track of its prey.

As Lord Ulswater rode so slowly past the stranger artist, with no one else in sight, and but a few yards of space between them, a space that the active Manxman could have cleared at a bound, the two were virtually alone together. The pencil quivered in Sark's hand, and a red film seemed to creep over his eyes, while his heart beat as fast as the wings of a hurt hawk flap the ground. There, within easy reach, was the man who had so wronged him. A spring forward, and his foe would be in his grasp. But no! A rash and futile attack would but rob him of his revenge. He must perforce be patient. John Carnac's careless attitude, as he sat leaning idly forward in the saddle, his arm still in a sling, did not prevent him from looking lithe and stalwart, the very type of graceful strength. Sark held but little to his life, now that the sunshine had gone out of his life, but he was unwilling to afford a new victory to the handsome homicide, who had hitherto foiled him so fatally. He was without weapons. To rush, unarmed, upon such an antagonist as that, would be as mad as for a man to try conclusions with a lion, with nothing but his naked hands to help him in the death-struggle. For aught he knew, his enemy's right arm might not be really disabled.

Lord Ulswater, then, passed on unmolested; and Sark, gazing after him, took from his pocket the little bundle of letters which old Brum had picked up from the floor of the upper room of the house among the market-gardens, where it had been tossed, unseen, amid the contents of rifled chests and boxes. It was tied with faded ribbon, that

had perhaps been worn by Loys. The widower hesitated to untie it, but he set his teeth hard, and undid the knots. The letters, with the ink of some of them discoloured by age and the moist sea-air, fell in a heap upon the open sketch-book that now rested on his knee. In his hand remained something harder and heavier, wrapped in silver-paper. He removed this, not roughly, but with careful dexterity, and a small picture in a gilt frame was revealed.

A picture indeed, but drawn by no less mighty a limner than the sun—a photograph. No production of some celebrated London manufacturer of likenesses—no sample from the studio of a world-renowned photographer, fattening on the proceeds of his gainful partnership with Phœbus Apollo: this was signed by an obscure dabbler in collodion, a vagrant taker of portraits, travelling the country with a van as Thespis travelled with a cart, but with whom Sol did not disdain to take a share in the business. It was a coloured sun-picture, representing two persons standing together beside a rock-banked mountain-stream—a man and a woman, both young and both beautiful. The first of these, a gentleman, as might well be seen, though dressed in such a garb as befits a pedestrian among the hills, with creel and knapsack, and an angling-rod in his hand, was a gallant figure to look upon. The second was a handsome, dark-haired girl, simply dressed, with a native grace about her bearing that was very winning. A lissom, lovely creature, in early womanhood, as her companion was in early manhood, but giving promise of a riper and richer beauty in years to come.

Perhaps the poor photographer had been one of those old ivory-staining miniature-painters, starved out by the camera as postboys by the railway; but at anyrate he handled the brush well, and had been careful and discreet with his colours. Loys and the Honourable John Carnac. No doubt, the wandering man of tent and chemicals had done his very best to please the open-handed young gentleman, fishing in Furness, and had brought out his apparatus to the banks of the stream where the young folks were wont to meet, and had kept their secret, and earned his extra pay by extra care and discretion. He had made a good likeness of the tall, noble-looking lad with golden hair, and the pretty brunette standing near, with one little hand coyly resting on her lover's arm. Loys did not look nearly so much like Jael the manslayer as afterwards at St Pagans. It took sorrow, and rage, and hot tears of angry shame, to bring that dark, doomed look upon her fiercely beautiful face.

The widower gazed after the receding figure of the horseman, and then his eyes fell again upon the double portrait, and he ground his teeth, and drew a long deep breath, like a diver rising to the surface. 'That fair-faced devil,' he said hoarsely, 'had he not harmed her enough, years ago!' and he seemed about to crush the picture beneath his heel, but he restrained the senseless impulse of destructiveness. 'It cannot feel, this daub!' he said with bitter emphasis. 'Even this may aid the evidence. Let us see!' And he began to examine the letters one by one.

Old love-letters are sad reading always perhaps. Is it pleasant to a man, or a woman either, to go through the perusal of the yellowed pages full of vows cancelled long ago, of promises broken, and little sweet quips and turns of speech whence

the savour, and the sweetness, and the wit have utterly departed, and for ever! Here are the fond phrases penned, more years since than you care to count, to the mistress for whom you care as much as for last winter's snow. What a lucky escape you had from her, and with what flower-juice had Puck rubbed your bewitched eyelids as you slept, that you should have laid down your heart for a football for such a jilting, shallow-souled jade as that! Again, here are the few short notes, treasured up along with a withered rose and a kid-glove, white once, but Isabella-coloured now, written to you by that sweet girl who ended by marrying a middle-aged man with a shining, bald forehead, and whiskers large and red. Or, if of the opposite sex, there are more lively studies than those of the captain's effusions, with bits of poetry, perhaps, checkering the impassioned prose—the captain's, who turned out so badly in India, marrying the half-caste heiress, and then beating her when her rupees were gone, drinking, gambling, quarrelling, and now to be seen any day on the pier at Boulogne, a broken-down, branded man.

It is painful in another way, too, to re-read the letters that we wrote to those whose love was enduring and faithful, dead long since, or those which their dear hands, never to press ours more, once traced upon the paper that is mouldering too, and is stained and blurred with age. But worst and gloomiest of all is the work of the man who looks over the hoarded correspondence of the dead wife that he loved, and reads the letters she penned to another man in the pale dim past, and those that he wrote to her, and that she has kissed, and fondled, and garnered in her bosom as girls are apt to caress the insensible paper on which the burning words have been traced. Jealousy is a plant of surprising vitality, and can exist even where no love is, save self-love; so that a narrow-hearted man may dislike his wife's child-admirers of school-room days and juvenile balls, and his wife's brothers and sisters, and his wife's lapdog, and all that she ever cared for, save him alone. It is not wonderful that James Sark, glancing over the notes that had once passed between Loys Fleming and Mr Carnac, was cut to the heart again and again.

Old love-letters should surely be burned as un pityingly as high-caste Hindu widows were used to be, in the palmy period of Brahmanical observance. They sting like dead wasps, sometimes. Sark was stung by the words that met his eye, and yet they were not greater tell-tales than those that lie lurking in many a desk and many a dressing-case. Why had the poor thing kept these, long after her love had changed to hate? She was a good wife, true as steel. But even good wives sometimes cherish a strange tenderness for some bygone bit of romance, that had better have been dipped in Lethe, and drowned there. He who had been her husband was not unjust to her memory now. She had been very fond and faithful to him; whatever the shadow of evil that rested on her earlier life, as his wife she had done her duty well and honestly. He shewed his sense of the fact now, in the care with which he handled those old letters that it was pain for him to read, not rudely crushing them with hasty fingers, but refolding them with gentle touch, as we deal with the dead that we love. For Loys had written them or read them, and her breath seemed still to be upon his cheek as he turned the pages,

and he was tender even of the letters, for her sake.

And presently his patience was rewarded. Written in newer ink, the blackness of which was yet untarnished, was a letter, the cover of which bore the words: 'For my dear husband. L. S.' The poor girl had written it with some secret presentiment, it would seem, of the violent and fearful fate in store for her. It was an explicit narrative or confession of the part which she had played at St Pagans as nurse to the late lord's only child, and an avowal of her motives for aiding in the vile conspiracy to make John Carnac heir of all. 'It was for the sake of my dear James'—so she wrote—'he was in prison, and we were poor. But I was not quite the fiend John Carnac thought me. The innocent boy smiled as he lay there in his bed, and my heart, that had been so hardened and desperate, was touched somehow—I don't know how—and I had mercy then—who ever shewed it to me?' These last words had a terrible significance now, read by the lurid light of the hideous past. Sark read them with dry, tearless eyes, but he groaned aloud and hid his face.

Before the post closed on that day at Shellton-on-Sea, this confession, under cover to Mr Greer the attorney, lay among the registered letters destined for London.

CHAPTER LX.—EARTH TO EARTH.

'Earth to earth, and dust to dust!' The handful of loose sand and pebbles rattled on the coffin below, as they were dropped into the open grave, half carelessly, in compliance with custom. The clergyman read the solemn words of the burial-service in a hurried monotone, glad to get a disagreeable duty over as rapidly as was consistent with decency. The ugly suburban cemetery, damp and raw-looking, with its streets of white headstones, its sprinkling of mausolea or other pretentious tombs, and its numerous mounds, beneath which lay the unnamed dead of the poor, was no agreeable place wherein for a narrow-chested curate to linger on that rainy autumn day. A very humble funeral, unattended by mourners, and as devoid of the gloomy pomp of plume, and scarf, and undertaker's finery as it was, of the loving train of friends, whose streaming eyes and honest grief not seldom put to shame the worldly faces looking coldly out of the windows of mourning-coach and complimentary carriage.

But there were many spectators present—a crowd; for it was Loys that was buried that day—the dead woman found murdered in old Van-peerenboom's wooden cottage among the market-gardens not far off, dwelling hereafter to be shunned as a haunted and accursed house, but the likeness of which, engraved on wood, or etched on steel, figured that week in several illustrated periodicals. The dust that was that day to be restored to its kindred clay was that of poor Loys, on whom an inquest had, of course, been held; and who had been placed in her coffin by the hands of strangers, without one who cared for her to follow her body to the last earthly resting-place—only that gaping crowd of gazers.

The ceremony, such as it was, was huddled over and done with, and a few spadefuls of the gravel, just enough to hide the plain coffin from view, were cast into the grave, and then the sexton went off to his dinner, meaning to return and finish his

job later in the day. The young curate had taken himself and his chronic cold and wet surplice out of the damp cemetery as soon as the last sentence prescribed by the rubric had been spoken. The lookers-on dropped off in twos and threes, the children loitering the longest; and then two men, one of whom was dressed in black, and had a crape on his hat, but who had kept quite away among the distant headstones, as if studying the inscriptions, drew nearer and nearer; and the younger of them, breaking from the other's hold, sprang forward, and fell on his knees on the brink of the open grave, sobbing passionately. 'O Loys, dear! My dear, dead Loys!'

The children lingering about the gate, in the vague hope that the show of the day, which had been disappointingly tame and soon over, might yet have its after-piece or epilogue, got up quite a little excitement about the conduct of this stranger kneeling by the grave. Their chattering and pointing alarmed old Brum, disconsolate in the background, and he urged his comrade to retire before he should be discovered. 'Once they get the bracelets on you, you're a gone coon!' said the Professor, who had lived with Yankees in his day, and had profited by the intercourse. James did not seem to hear him. He was bending over the yawning pit that held the form of her he had loved so well, and talking wildly, as if his dead wife could hear his words, and rise at his entreaty. It was a melancholy sight to see. There must have been good left in the heart of a man who was capable of such great love. Sark was a wayward, restless Ishmaelite, justly outlawed, a law-breaker and a prison-breaker; but there must have been some redemption possible for him, *quia multum amavit*. A capacity for loving is not universally to be found among the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve. Many worthy men and virtuous women go through a long life of unimpeachable rectitude, and have no more notion, from their first childhood to their second, of what love means than a blind man has of colours.

'Now Jem, Jem!' Brum almost wrung his hands; it was so provoking. He had been persuaded, against his own judgment, to countenance this rash act, this coming to the funeral, and poor Sark had promised to be very prudent, and here he was behaving in this way, calling attention to his presence in that spot, and attracting notice which might prove fatal to the whole plan of the campaign. 'Don't be a baby, old chap!' pleaded the Professor; 'it don't do no manner of good, none at all. She can't hear you, poor soul!'

'How do you know that?' asked Sark fiercely; but in a moment more he held out his hand in sign of amity. 'You mean kindly, Brum,' he said with a sob, dashing away the tears that stood in his eyes and dimmed his sight—'you mean well to me, and you meant well to her, poor lass! And I am a fool and a muf, I know, to run the risk of being collared as James Sark, the forger and the thief, just because the only thing that ever cared a straw for me since my old mother's lifetime lies here.' He tried to rise, but threw himself down again so frantically that Brum almost thought he was about to fling himself into the grave before him, and broke out afresh: 'O Brum, old man, what matters my liberty to me? I wish they'd hang me outright, and let me go to her, wherever she is, away from here. Wasn't it enough to be forced to leave her to strangers, to be stared at, and thrust

into her coffin, and covered up from men's sight for ever, without being forbidden so much as to follow her to her long home—my dear, my darling!—Let me be, Professor. I care for nothing now.'

All this was immensely interesting to the children, who came nearer and nearer, observant of the strange man's wild gestures, and eager to hear his words, and to know whether he were mad, or drunk, or merely a play-actor, that he spoke and gesticulated thus. Brum turned upon them with a volley of oaths that drove them back, frightened, to the gate, and then following them there, as a new idea struck him, he made friends with them by distributing peace-offerings of halfpence and small silver among them. 'There,' he said, 'go and buy bull's-eyes, or oranges, or something, but don't bother the gentleman there, that's good children. He ain't quite right'—and Brum tapped his forehead—'so don't you get too near him, my kids.'

Having bought off his young tormentors with this black-mail, and seeing them run in a cluster towards the nearest apple-stall, the Professor went back to James Sark. 'Jem,' he said, 'every minute you stop here is throwing away a chance. The young uns will go talking about, and send a lot more to look at the madman in the burying-ground. That gardener fellow, too, he's left off work to watch you. I'll bet a sovereign to sixpence he's turning it over in his stupid head whether you and me are them that the government has offered a reward for. Once let a whisper reach the police station, and'—

'Yes, you're right,' interrupted Sark, drying his eyes, and brushing away the gravel from his clothes as he prepared to rise. 'I'm more my own man now.' He bent his head, and kissed the earth beside the new-dug grave, as he had kissed the cold face of her over whom it was to lie. 'Good-bye, Loys, good-bye, my own!' he murmured, in so low a voice that it escaped Brum's ear; and then he rose to his feet. 'I'm ready to go,' he said, turning his face away from the grave.

Brum looked apprehensively at his fixed look and colourless cheek. 'Lean on me a bit, old fellow; you're ill,' said the sympathetic Professor, who was himself nearer to snivelling, as he called it, in his secret heart, than seemed worthy of a philosopher like himself.

But Sark declined the old man's offered arm. He walked away slowly, and with faltering steps and bowed shoulders, as if age had come suddenly upon him; but he neither spoke nor threw one glance behind him, until the cemetery was left far distant, and the two were in a bustling suburban road, within sight of one of those railway-stations, of preternatural ugliness, which rise like brick-and-mortar giants in the outskirts of London. By this time, the Manxman was walking stoutly and well. It seemed as if every pace that intervened between him and that sad resting-place where Loys had been laid to sleep had taken away something from the weakness that had come upon him in the deserted cemetery. He turned to Brum, and his eyes were bright, and his voice almost cheerful as he said: 'You are a patient mate, Professor. I shan't be ungrateful, old man. A little more patience, and then—Come and take our tickets, Brum. I hear the train coming to carry us to town.'

CHAPTER LXI.—THE PASSENGER, OUTWARD-BOUND.

'For San Francisco direct, the splendid, fast-sailing, British-built clipper-ship *Golden Gate*, A No. 1

at Lloyd's; George Hopkins, commander. Carries a surgeon. To sail from Liverpool; and has excellent accommodation in chief-cabin, second-cabin, and steerage. For freight or passage, apply;' &c. This advertisement had been conspicuous in London and Liverpool papers for some time past; and now the great three-master, with her tall spars and fine lines, was clear of the Mersey and the Head, and had cast off her tug, and parted with her pilot, as with all her white sails spread, like wings of a gigantic albatross, she glided off majestically on her long ocean-voyage.

Among the second-class passengers was Bendigo Bill. Lord Ulswater had kept his word. It was thanks to his patron's skill and his patron's purse that the ruffian was once more launched upon the world. The chase after this man had been a hot one. He was 'wanted,' and badly wanted, by the Home Office and the Scotland Yard prefect of police. But although a strict watch had been kept upon the outgoing ships bound for such familiar ports as New York and Philadelphia, no detective's imagination soared so high as to induce suspicion of those occupying the *Golden Gate's* second-cabin. British rogues do not often take ship for California, probably finding the fares heavy, and the market for their hypothetical industry glutted with native talent. And if a fraudulent bankrupt or a bolting bank-clerk might be expected to take refuge in so remote a region, the very expense and mystery of the voyage might be presumed to render it caviare to such a fugitive as William Huller.

The myrmidons of Justice, therefore, some representatives of whom were probably on the Mersey quays that day, took no heed of the silent middle-aged German, with the red beard, partly grizzled, the Tyrol hat, the spectacles, the braided frock-coat, meerschaum pipe, soiled gloves, and loose boots of patent leather, who came leisurely down to the water-side, a packet of foreign books under one arm, and a heap of cloaks encumbering the other. That High Dutchman, with his combined air of smartness, dirt, and erudition, might have been a doctor, a lecturer, a scientific traveller in quest of new butterflies or lichens from the other side of the world; but he looked as Teutonic as Karl the Great or Ritter Toggenburg. He had a friend with him, an Englishman, unmistakably a gentleman, who was very kind and attentive to the learned foreigner about to quit our shores, and who went on board with him. This gentleman had his right arm in a sling. Lord Ulswater it was who thus escorted this pseudo-German on board the *Golden Gate*. He stayed in the vessel to the last; and when the bell rang, and the cry was 'For the shore!' he left the clipper, in company with others who had lingered to press the hands of the friends of whom they had 'seen the last' in England surely, perhaps on earth. There were men and women with wet cheeks, turning back to wave their handkerchiefs, even after the vessel had been towed so far down the river that the farewell signal could not be distinguished by even the keenest eye unassisted by a glass, and children whose father would be half a stranger to them when, after many years, those so near in blood should meet again.

Among this little throng was a young man, with a felt hat slouched over his eyes, and a well-worn velvet coat, out of one pocket of which protruded a small green book, brass-clasped, a sketch-book

plainly. Lord Ulswater's eye scarcely rested on this man at all. An artist was nothing new, and in no way interesting to him. Where had he seen just such a strolling fellow as that? In Shellton it was, and not long since, with which thought he dismissed the subject. But as for dreaming that the very hat, and the identical coat of shabby velvet that had been worn by the sketcher who was drawing by the roadside as he rode to the door of the manor-house, were now within arm's-length of him at Liverpool, and were there because he was there, he would have laughed at the notion as absurd. He would not have been inclined to laugh, had he known that the supposed artist, dogging him like his shadow, watchful of his every movement, yet to all appearance bestowing no attention on him at all, was no other than James Sark.

For now Lord Ulswater, though blindly unaware of the fact, had in a great measure ceased to be in his own keeping, to belong, as it were, to himself, and was followed, and kept ward over, by an unsuspected foe. His confidence was in some measure coming back to him, now that he had got his liegeman, Bendigo Bill, snugly embarked and under-weight for a country where the Queen's writs in criminal process do not run. 'The odds are enormous,' he thought to himself, 'against the brute's return. Taos whisky and swamp-fevers, savage Indians and more savage miners, await my friend yonder; and it is hard if, in some gamblers' free-fight, a stray bullet or bowie-knife does not silence Mr Huller effectually.'

Hope began to whisper in John Carnac's ear, and the music of her voice was welcome. His fears had been all of legal proceedings; not that he had ever entertained much dread of a conviction, since the only tongue that could betray him was mute for ever, but because enough would be revealed on even the most incomplete trial to blast his fair fame, and to make him a banished man for life, unpunished by the law, but excommunicated from all that makes life worth the having.

At the cost of great personal peril, trouble, and forethought, he had removed the chief stumbling-blocks out of his path. Loys was dead; Marsh was dead. The death of the man did not lie so directly at his door as did the death of the woman. He had been vexed at first to hear of the doctor's fate. His over-zealous servant had gone near to implicating him, just as Henry II.'s over-zealous servants had got *their* royal master into the worst of scrapes by slaying the Archbishop on his own chance floor. But the affair had gone off unexpectedly well. The man who had rid Lord Ulswater of an enemy was safely shipped off to the uttermost parts of the earth, and no untimely discovery had been made. It was better so. Two very dangerous witnesses were debarred from bearing testimony against John Carnac, until they should stand up to proclaim his sins upon the judgment-day.

Dupe, dullard that he was, with all his craft and all his subtlety! His eyes were dim, and his ears were deaf to the real sights and sounds of the coming doom. Digging a pit for his enemy, as cunning men, such as he, have done for ages unnumbered, he recked not of falling into it himself, to perish miserably. The bold stroke that was to make him safe for ever, was to prove his undoing. For his other misdeeds, Nemesis might have waited to punish beyond the tomb; for the last wrong wrought, the penalty must be paid on this earth, in this life, and in full.

John Carnac had been very successful. The Fiend had served him well in that tacit bargain of theirs. He had no thought of the wild German legend of the hunter who bought the magic bullets, never missing, and won high praise, and a forester's place, and the maiden he loved to be his wife, all with the rifle-balls of the demon's casting, and then—with the random shot that was to be the Fiend's portion, laid the betrothed pretty one bleeding, dead, at his feet. 'Fifty go true, three go askew!' So is it elsewhere than in the Harz Mountains or in the Schwarzwald.

The shabby artist in the velvet coat kept Lord Ulswater well in sight, watching him as he passed through the streets, as he entered his hotel, as he left it, as he made his way to the railway station. With a vigilance that never relaxed, but with a caution that avoided any ostensible act which might apprise his foe of the unfriendly eye that was upon him, the man, turned blood-hound for the time, held stanchly to the trail. The Furies of pagan superstition could not have followed the evil-doer with more fell a purpose or more pitiless patience. Yet, fearing nothing, and exulting in his success, Lord Ulswater took his place in the up-train; and in the same train, but in a different carriage, the shabby artist in the velvet coat took his place also. He had entered the telegraph-office shortly before the departure, and had sent a message along the wires, addressed to Greer and Starriker.

SPLENDID SAVAGES.

If we were indebted to the newspaper Press for nothing else than our better knowledge of foreign countries, the debt would still be large. We had no informant upon this subject in old times equal to the Special Correspondent of to-day. The man who resided in some far-off land for half a lifetime, and came home and published the results of his experience, was of course more exhaustive in his account; but his remarks were wanting in freshness: he forgot his first impressions (which, for a book of travel, are the most essential) before he began to write; his details were often uninteresting, and his reflections (for readers like to reflect for themselves) almost always superfluous. On the other hand, the traveller who merely strayed beyond the limits of the Grand Tour, and published his *Fortnight in Timbuctoo*, or elsewhere, had little to say, because he had no opportunities for investigation. Now, to 'the Special' in strange latitudes, all doors—almost those of the harem itself—fly open. Emperors who wish to stand well with England, and shrewdly suspect that she is most easily cajoled by means of her favourite, the Press, issue the *mot d'ordre* that its emissaries shall be royally treated. Generals, of opposing hosts, vie with one another in placing these Bohemians on their staff. They see more of everything that is worth seeing, and that from the most convenient point of view, abroad, than do policemen of the A division at home; and of course they are the very people to give us a graphic account of it all. They are chosen, not upon the diplomatic system, because they are stepsons or first-cousins of newspaper proprietors, but simply because they are the best writers that can be got for the work; and excellently well do they perform their office.

One of the most talented of these gentry, and who bids fair ('bar one,' as the betting-men say) to stand at the very summit of his profession, has lately favoured us with his experiences of a month in Russia.* It is true that these are confined to St Petersburg and Moscow; but the new and the old capitals of that vast empire are admirable types of new and old Russia; and our author's eyes let nothing slip. The occasion of his visit was the late marriage of the Czarovitch with Princess Dagmar, and everything that could wear a holiday aspect was made to do so; if rose-colour, therefore, is not the prevailing hue of the narrative, we may conclude that Russia in ordinary times is not a very cheerful country to live in. That, indeed, would be naturally one's own supposition. An inclement climate; a despotic and venal government; and a population in which only one-half per cent. can read or write, do not present materials of much promise. But that large class of persons who delight in paradox, have been so won over by that small class of persons who travel and lie, that the general opinion in England is, that the Muscovite noble is a man of great intelligence and refinement, and the Muscovite peasant not worse off, at all events since the abolition of serfdom, than the Dorsetshire labourer. Mr Dicey's book will go far to dispel this mischievous illusion.

The first glimpse which our author meets with of the preparations that are awaiting him and all Western visitors at St Petersburg, upon this auspicious occasion, is at Cologne; he has there, for fellow-traveller, a Russian government courier, who, besides his ordinary luggage, conveys with him twelve enormous cases—each taking four men to lift it—covered with black oilcloth, and of most funeral aspect; these contain the wedding-dresses of the imperial family, made of course in Paris. St Petersburg, in spite of the late czar's endeavours, having not yet rivalled the capital of France in fashion, although it may have surpassed it in a certain savage splendour.

The Northern Terminus at Berlin, says our author (who did not visit it upon this occasion for the first time), is the point on the journey Russia-wards where you seem to begin really to leave Western Europe behind you, and to pass the confines of its civilisation. The chimney-pot hat and trousers which form the ordinary garb of gentlemen, whether in London, Paris, Berlin, or Vienna, nay, New York or St Louis, are here exchanged for more fantastic costumes. The railway platform looks like the stage of a theatre, so variously appalled are those who stand there, waiting to be whirled to their far-off homes; in gorgeous caps, in immense fur-pelisses, in boots—such as the Baron in the story used to call for in his voice of thunder. Walachians, Magyars, Bohemians, Poles, Muscovites, all speaking in tongues which, even to our travelled author, were entirely unknown. But it was not until he had left Prussian Poland far behind, and even the provinces of the Pomeranian Baltic, that the landscape altered in its German features. 'The night had closed in again when we left the last Prussian station, passed over a narrow stream on which the rails on either side were painted in different colours, and found ourselves in Russia. I have never crossed a frontier where the change between two countries was so

marked and signal. We could still see the lamps of the Prussian station, and yet we were amidst a population to whom German appeared well-nigh unknown. Wild-looking porters, dressed in sheepskin coats, and resembling the Anabaptist peasants in the *Prophète*, jabbered round us in an unknown jargon. Passports were asked for, and scrutinised rigidly; we were driven through one room after another, provided with mysterious passes, to enable us to make our way past sentries, so that nobody could leave the room unauthorised; and were soon taught by unmistakable signs that, if we wanted to get our passports viséd, and our luggage passed without unnecessary detention, we must fee somebody for the privilege. The rooms in which we waited were really magnificent of their kind; but the food was bad, the attendance worse, the charges for everything were enormous, and cheating appeared to be the received rule of everybody connected with the establishment.'

Nor was the 'look-out' from the carriage-window more promising than the moral aspect.

'Pomerania was "triste" enough; but there, at anyrate, there was the look of life, and comfort, and prosperity. Here the one prevailing aspect was that of exceeding loneliness. For mile after mile we went creeping on—our average pace, I should say, was fifteen miles an hour—through immense stunted forests. The pine-woods of Poland are dismal, but they are cheerful compared to these endless larch forests, half-swamps, half-plantations. The bare white stalks of the larch and the silver birch stood gaunt and grim by the side of the squat fir-trees amidst which they were interspersed. The earth was dun-coloured, covered with dark mosses and lichens. All through the woods, there lay charred and blackened stumps; there was water everywhere, not running brooks or clear streams, but dark pools surrounded with dank weeds, and gloomy meres with stacks of black turf piled beside them. The woods appeared well-nigh tenantless; a few wild-fowl hovered about the marshes; I saw a hare or two startled from the ferns by the rattle of the train; water-rats could be seen stealing down to the edge of the pools; but other life there was none. When you left the forest for a time, and got out into the cleared country, the aspect was not much more cheerful. The bare fields were half-covered with boulders of gray round stone; the soil looked so sodden with wet, it seemed hard to believe any crops could ever grow there; the field-roads were black tracks of earth, mashed down by horses' feet; every now and then, you saw a herd of black pigs, or a few lean oxen, guarded by a peasant clad in sheepskin so dirty as to have become the same colour as the sombre fields; in the distance, there were blocks of low wooden huts or sheds, which, I suppose, were villages, but from which no smoke issued; heaps of dead soaked hay could be seen stacked together loosely; in the fields themselves there were pools without end, fringed with rows of bare bulrush stalks. Half-a-dozen times within the day, I caught sight of a town with gilt minaret towers, which, I presume, were those of churches. Twice, I think, we passed a château, with white-washed Corinthian pillars, and a stucco façade, cracked and weather-stained. But the general impression left by the fleeting glances I caught of such things in passing was one of extreme desolation.' There were points of resemblance, indeed, between this cheerless landscape

* *A Month in Russia during the Marriage of the Czarovitch.* By Edward Dicey. London: Macmillan.

and the half-cleared settlements of Western America, but there was this important difference: in the latter case you see at once that the wilderness is being brought into cultivation; in Russia, it looks as if the forest and the swamp were gaining ground upon the settler.

'Russians tell me,' says Mr Dicey, 'without moving a muscle, that to see their country in its true aspect, I must go southward. *I only speak of what I have seen.*'

There is an air of truth, indeed, about all Mr Dicey's descriptions which is very refreshing to us stay-at-homes. We feel that we are not reading, in this volume, one of those laborious attempts, only too common with travellers, to make facts chime with their preconceived theories; we have a confidence that our author is shewing us genuine photographs, and that whatever looks ugly is at least no fault of the sun's; and, above all, we are grateful to him for protection against those travelled nuisances among ourselves (although, to do ourselves justice, we have never believed them) who are always making insidious comparisons between what they have seen in Nova Zembla, or other out-of-the-way region, and what we have to shew at home. 'I have a friend,' says he (and who has not?), 'who never loses an opportunity of asserting that some quay or other in Monte Video, or Rio Janeiro, or Valparaiso, I forget now which, is the finest thoroughfare in the world. If I thought St Petersburg were far enough off, I would certainly declare that persons who had never seen the "Newski Prospekt" have no notion of street architecture. But, as the imposture is certain to be detected, I confess that even Regent Street, not to mention the Boulevards, or the Corso at Milan, is a much handsomer street than the far-famed "Prospekt." The latter bears a strong family resemblance to the modern portion of the Rue Rivoli, after the arcades have ceased. It has a close cousinship with New Oxford Street; it shews an unmistakable affinity to Tottenham Court Road and to Market Street, Manchester. I do not say this from the slightest wish to cry that all is barren from Dan to Beersheba. But when I am told, as I have been constantly, by travellers in Russia, that the Newski Prospekt is one of the grandest of European streets, I am bound, in common honesty, to protest that it is not. The roadway is very broad, and the street stretches for an interminable length; but when you have said this, you have said pretty well all. Externally, the shops are not brilliant to look at. Signboards, advertising placards, and painted figure-heads are stuck all over the frontage. The lower part of every house is occupied by shops; and most of those shops have a miscellaneous "general-store" look about them which deprives them of any appearance of grandeur.' At the same time, Mr Dicey admits that the Newski Prospekt is one of the most interesting of thoroughfares, from the contrasts it affords in those who frequent it. Ladies dressed in the richest and most costly sables, followed by chasseurs in gilt braid, feathers, and stripes, are seen there side by side with Russian peasants clad in sheepskins, hanging to their heels, and tied tightly round their waists. And until you have seen these last, you do not know what dirt is. You must go to Russia to see filth in its true perfection. In these sheepskin coats the peasants lie night and day, nor ever change them until they fall to pieces. The foreheads of these men are broad and low; their

cheek-bones stick out, their eyes are sunken, their noses flattened, with wide, open nostrils, their mouths large, and their complexion of a yellow hue not common in the West.

But let us leave such comparatively worthless objects as the common people, and hurry with our author to the railway station to meet the Prince of Wales and the other invited guests, whose special train is already signalled. The emperor himself is there, of course in full uniform (as every male Russian who is worth mentioning always is); and our own Prince and his suite have decked themselves in military costume accordingly. In the four immense saloon-carriages there are nearly a hundred officers in the most brilliant uniforms, and almost as many stars among them as in the firmament. This contrast between the splendour of the few and the squalor of the many is continuously being presented in Russia. In St Petersburg, unlike any western city (where, however, such contrasts are striking enough), this extends even to the buildings. Next to the palace stands the Hovel. All the wealth is lavished upon church and mansion; there is nothing to spare for the general comfort. St Isaac's Church, for instance, is perhaps the most gorgeous shrine in all Christendom. Its steps are of porphyry, its pillars of basalt, its walls of marble, its capitals of bronze; 'yet the square in the centre of which it stands is worse paved than the back-streets of the poorest German town.' It is said that in London are to be seen the extremes of riches and poverty; but then there are many intermediate states. Now, in St Petersburg, there is nothing of the sort. Luxury and misery stand shoulder to shoulder. The most sumptuous civilisation (although, indeed, it may be only uniform-deep), confronts the most filthy barbarism. 'Dives and Lazarus are the only two parts in the Russian life-drama.' There are no respectable classes in St Petersburg. The extreme paucity of well-dressed people in the streets, although the people that are well dressed are gorgeous, strikes every stranger; and those who are ill clothed, that is, nineteen-twentieths of the population, have a brutal and degraded look in the extreme. Folks are not all sober in Glasgow (it is whispered), but Glasgow is a temperance town compared with the Russian capital. 'Everywhere, and at all hours of the day, you meet with intoxicated people.' Our author beheld an elderly gentleman, attired in the most splendid furs, go reeling down the Newski, lurching from lamp-post to lamp-post, without attracting any particular attention, far less the attention of the police, which would have certainly happened in Regent Street. 'Amongst the lower class—for the word class can hardly be used in the plural number in Russia—drunkenness is said to be universal. It is not odd that it should be so, for any sort of intellectual amusement, or even innocent amusement, is out of their reach. The theatres are splendid, and the performances excellent; but then the prices of admission are utterly beyond the means of common pockets. . . . Boozing on bad spirits, in stifling cellars of cut-throat aspect, is, so far as I can learn, the one solitary enjoyment provided for the Russian peasant.'

Without the means of getting sufficient warmth, too, life at St Petersburg must be wretched indeed. The cruel sharpness of the east wind, that blows across the Gulf of Bothnia, is something indescribable; and, wrap yourself up as you may (you who

have got them), in furs and cloaks, your feet and ears tingle with the pain. Yet St Petersburg is one of the few cities where a large number of people sleep habitually in the open streets at night. Our author saw plenty of them (not, mind, to be confounded with the watchmen who guard every third house) lying on benches before the street doors, when he was returning late from the splendid entertainments at the palace.

Let us turn from the contemplation of such abject misery to the other side of the picture of Russian life. Our author, as British special newspaper correspondent, has, of course, an invitation to the imperial wedding, and makes one of the couple of hundred black coats that serve as foils there to the two thousand brilliant uniforms.

In the Winter Palace, which stretches for nearly half a mile along the banks of the Neva, the quarters of the officials are more splendidly furnished than the most luxurious of Albany chambers. The state-apartments are palaces such as the geni of the *Arabian Nights* were wont to raise for those who possessed the almighty ring of Solomon the Great. 'Wealth was lavished everywhere, in every form. Outside immense picture-galleries, along spacious corridors, across vast reception-rooms, by winter-gardens filled with aloes and orange-trees, and cactuses and palm-trees, we passed on and on. Through the windows you could see the snow-flakes falling against the dull dim sky; and when you looked back again, you seemed to be in fairy-land. I have a confused recollection of splendid malachite vases, of porphyry tables, plates of solid gold, cups studded with precious stones, of cases full of gems, of gilded cornices, and silver hangings, scattered about in every corner where room could be found to place them. Old Blücher's saying, when he surveyed London, rose unbidden to one's mind. Even the least covetous of mankind could not, I deem, have avoided thinking to himself what a place it would be to plunder.'

At last, our author reached the long suite of halls that look forth upon the Neva, where the persons admitted to witness the procession of the court to the chapel were collected. 'Anything more brilliant than the crowd so formed cannot easily be imagined. There was to be seen well-nigh every description of uniform which sartorial ingenuity could devise; though they differed in every other respect, they were all alike in their elaborate richness. Gold was literally scattered about them by handfuls. An officer with one of the least gilt-bebraided uniforms I observed there, told me that the gold upon his coat alone had cost him a hundred pounds. If this was the case, it is terrible to think what must have been the value of many of these costumes. Looking on the rooms from above, you must have seemed to see below a floating haze of gold and scarlet.

The ladies were attired in the most gorgeous colours. Crimson, saffron, violet, pink, and green were only a few of the hues of their shining silks; while, as for jewels, there was scarcely a lady who had not such a profusion of them as would have made their wearer an object of attention in any London ball-room. The chapel where the ceremony took place was, of course, a still more gorgeous spectacle. But the description of so much magnificence, and pomp, and parade, however graphically described, becomes as wearisome to read as, sooner or later, it must become to

witness. The only touch of pathos connected with the marriage of that beautiful young girl with the heir of All the Russias (whose somewhat truculent portrait contrasts with her own sweet face not altogether pleasantly in this volume), occurs in our author's account of the burial-place of the House of Romanoff. Under the last and latest in the gallery of tombs lay the body of the poor lad who died at Nice, and was to have been the hero of all this festivity. On his tomb was a plain black chaplet, newly placed among the many with which the grave was decorated. 'It had been hung there the other day, so the sexton told me, by the lady who was sometime Princess Dagmar, and is now the orthodox Grand Duchess Maria Federovna.'

Where the Prince of Wales went, it was necessary (in the interests of the British public) that our author should also go, and accordingly he went to Moscow. When the Czar Nicholas had the plans of the projected railway between his two capitals laid before him, zigzagging hither and thither, in order to secure the traffic of the other great towns upon the way, he drew a straight line upon the chart, and said: 'So must it be.' The result is, great convenience of communication, to be sure, but, on the other hand, this great railway only passes one important town in the whole of the six hundred versts it traverses. A fellow-traveller assured our author that, constantly as he had been on the line, he had never seen anybody either get in or out at the roadside stations.

The completeness of the arrangements for the comfort of passengers seems something marvellous compared with our own wretched railway accommodation. 'The train consisted of half-a-dozen cars of immense length. They were all much of a pattern. Entering by the middle, you come first into a small saloon, with a table in the centre, surrounded by sofas and divans. From one side of this saloon a passage, broad and high enough for a tall man or a lady in crinoline to walk along without much difficulty, leads to the further end of the carriage, opening by a door on to the iron platform outside. Out of this passage you pass, pushing aside the heavy curtains, into any one of the three private apartments—I know of no more appropriate word—into which the carriage is divided. In the daytime, these apartments look like very luxurious first-class carriages, with arm-chair seats for six persons. On the other side of the saloon I have spoken of was a passage leading to similar apartments, reserved for ladies; and on the roof there was a sleeping-saloon, to which you ascended by a winding staircase. The view from this upper floor is excellent, but in winter-time the lower apartments are chosen by preference. Everything in the whole place was admirably arranged; the doors fitted closely; and, as in entering the carriage you have to pass through a succession of doors, one of which you close before you open the other, there is no draught from the cold, bleak air outside. . . . Besides the apartments set apart for travellers, there were washing-places and dressing-rooms, all handsomely fitted up, and, what is even more remarkable, scrupulously clean.'

When night arrived, the attendants, 'three of whom—two men and one woman—are attached to every car, lit the lamps, the curtains were drawn, a green baize portable table was fixed in the centre of our compartment, wax-candles were

fastened at the corners, and chess, and draughts, and cards were offered to us, in case we did not wish to sleep or to read. Learning that the duty upon cards was paid over to the funds of the noble foundling-hospitals with which Russia is provided, we thought ourselves justified in supporting the cause of charity, and from dark till it was time to go to bed, we played at whist as comfortably as if we had been seated in a London club-room. Every fifty miles or so, was a first-class station, with refreshment-rooms, supplied with every delicacy, duck, and geese, and venison, huge fishes and plump partridges, jellies and puddings, tarts and pasties, all laid out so charmingly, that it seemed a shame to eat them. No wonder our author blushed to think of 'the shabby counters, the stale buns, the grizzly fly-blown patties, the horse-bean soup, and the scraggy drumsticks of similar establishments at home.' It must be added, however, *per contra*, that at the booking-office of this Elysian line of railway, there is something still to be learned even from the *London, Chatham, and Dover*. 'I was served with a ticket—the document looked so like a writ, that the word "served" suggests itself naturally—about a foot in length, covered with cabalistic characters. Then I had to procure another document of the same length for my sleeping-berth in the train, and then I had to obtain a separate ticket for every article of luggage I did not take in the carriage with me. One ticket would have done as well; but it is the cardinal principle of all Russian administration never to use one piece of writing where two can possibly be employed. I may mention, as an instance of the way in which business is carried on, that at one bureau in the station they gave me a five-rouble note in change so tattered, and torn, and greasy, that I declined taking it till I was assured of its genuineness; at another bureau in the self-same hall I tendered this note in payment, and had it positively refused as worthless. Happily, I had time to insist on its being changed. It was returned to the railway officials, and will doubtless be passed off on some other stranger, who is either more unsuspicious or more pressed for time than I chanced to be myself.'

At Moscow, the squalor and the splendour afford even sharper contrast than in the more modern capital. There is an utter absence of all *bourgeois* houses. If you are a prince or a peasant, you can be suitably lodged enough; but if you want an eight-roomed house, or a flat to yourself, you will look in vain. The fact is, the only persons in all Russia with moderate incomes are the officials, and these are miserably underpaid. An officer of high rank informed our author that his pay of one hundred and fifty pounds (spent, we imagine, on uniforms) was utterly insufficient to support him, and that he should be literally in want, did he not carry on private business as a nondescript broker. Some officers carry on much less legitimate trades. A paragraph in one of the Russian papers, describing the breaking up of a gang of burglars in Kazan, whose chief was ascertained to be Lieutenant —, of the — regiment, quartered in that town, did not appear to excite the slightest surprise. When our officers go wrong, they generally adopt the wine or the small-coal trade; but in Russia there is a great opening among them for felony, since the police (all old soldiers) never venture to interfere with an officer in uniform, but only stand at the salute while the little peccadillo

is being transacted. As for the taking of bribes, that is universal among all functionaries, whether military or civil. A gentleman who has much experience in dealing with Russian government officials, thus describes his operations. 'When he had stated his business, whatever it might be, he pulled out his cigar-case, and offered it to his interlocutor, telling him to help himself. In one side, there were cigarettes, in the other, the sum of paper roubles he intended to offer; and it was very seldom he found the notes still left in the cigar-case when it was returned to him.'

The Kremlin at Moscow, on which the wealth of the empire has been expended since Napoleon left it but bare walls, is such an edifice as you behold in dreams. 'From the pavement to the summit of its lofty domes, supported on its vast porphyry pillars, it is one mass of gold and colour. You can hardly put your hand upon a place not decorated with stones and jewels. Amethyst and onyx, jasper and opals, and all the stones whose names are recorded in the adornment of Solomon's Temple, seem to have been employed to make the shrine more splendid still. Upon the dusky portraits of the Virgin Mother and her Child, with which the walls are covered, you see hanging necklaces of diamonds, strings of jewels, each one of which must be worth a fortune. . . . The very walls are wrought of silver; the roof is of solid gold.' In the courtyard of this gorgeous edifice there stand nearly a thousand guns, all captured from the *Grande Armée*. Equally characteristic of the morals of Moscow, as the Kremlin is of its religion, is the Lying-in Hospital. 'Women enter here with masks on, which they wear during their whole time of residence in its secret wards. No questions are asked; and they leave, when their confinement is over, as unknown as when they entered the establishment.'

Back at St Petersburg, our author finds the princely fêtes going on as briskly as ever. He goes to a state performance at the theatre, where everybody is the guest of the czar, and where the champagne flows like water for all comers—you might even fill your pockets with bonbons: in all that splendid house, there were not a score of men in civilian attire; no occupant of the pit-stalls held rank lower than that of a general officer, and each one, without exception, wore the Grand Cordon of some native or foreign order. Not a lady there was without diamonds, or those strings of pearls which they are said not to take off even when they sleep, lest the pearls should *die* and lose colour. Perhaps the finest spectacle which St Petersburg afforded, however, during this month of feasting was the ball given by the Grand Duke Constantine at the Marble Palace. This magnificent mansion was not only thrown open to his thousand guests, so far as the reception-rooms were concerned, but every apartment in the house was placed at their pleasure. The bedrooms and dressing-rooms were promenade as freely as the drawing-rooms. 'It seemed to me as if the long procession would never end. Out of halls blazing with light and colour you passed into low galleries; then into bedchambers hung with rich tapestries; then into alcoves surrounded with gorgeous flowers; then into corridors where fountains sparkled brightly; and then again into new ranges of halls, each more splendid than the last which you had traversed.'

But enough of this surfeit of splendour. Our

author did not omit to make himself acquainted with how the mass of the population of St Petersburg were amusing themselves during these great doings. He spent a night in 'seeing life,' as it was to be seen in those favourite places of resort the public spirit-cellars. 'I have seen low drinking-shops in St Giles's; I have been into pretty-waiter-girls' saloons in the Bowery, New York; I have seen whisky stores in the wynds of Glasgow; but I have never seen anything, bad as these are, approaching to the squalor and degraded misery of these Russian wodka-shops. The cellar was damp, and reeking with a hot, fetid air; the walls were bare, and slimy with wet; furniture there was none; around the walls there were wooden settles, on which men and women sat huddled together, stupid with drink. Every face was bleared, blotched, and blurred by intoxication. None of the company were talking, or even quarrelling. Wrapped in their sheepskins and soiled furs, they sat there silently. There is nothing sociable about the drinking of the common Russians; when they get liquor, they gulp it down, and will go on gulping till their supply is gone or they are dead drunk. . . . Through the window-panes I looked into numbers of these stores: they were all the same—all bare, all filthy, all crowded with men and women besotted with liquor. And then I had a hideous vision of a public tavern, where a hundred men, sunk to the level of brutes, and unsexed women all in rags, all far past the stage of feeling the slightest care for their personal appearance, all filthy, most of them with black eyes and broken heads, sat boozing together at long deal tables, literally black with dirt. Neither the men nor the women looked like human beings. There was no rioting, no singing, no entertainment of any kind; and from the wall the picture of Christ looked down upon this wallowing mass of creatures made after God's own image. I had seen life enough, and I went home wiser perhaps, sadder certainly.

From the journal of Mr Dicey's graphic volume we also rise 'wiser perhaps, sadder certainly.' What is fine about Russia is its court. As a country, it seems simply barbarous; nay, worse than barbarous, for there is no rough and ready justice to be got in it that may sometimes be procured even among savages. Might is right from end to end of it. Even the sleekness of manner about the courtiers themselves—to whose constant courtesy our author bears grateful witness—has something of the tiger-cat about it. 'The Russians I was thrown into contact with were polished, well educated, high bred, to an almost exaggerated degree. But I could never shake off the impression that they had got on their company-manners for the occasion. Moreover, in my case, this impression was heightened by the fact that I had once seen the Russians under a different aspect. Three years ago, I was in Poland during the insurrection. I am myself by no means a Philo-Pole. From what I have seen of both nations, I should say Poles and Russians were very much alike, especially the Poles. Of the two races, I prefer the Muscovite, which, I believe, will ultimately absorb the other. But nobody who ever saw Warsaw as I did, during Mouravieff's reign of terror, could avoid the feeling that the Russians of real life are extremely different to what they appear in the artificial world of court gaieties.' In a word, Russian civilisation extends no further

than her court, and even there is only skin-deep; nay, it scarcely penetrates the skin. It is lost in the costly fur and the brilliant uniform.

LUCIFER-MATCHES.

SINCE the beginning of the present century, it may with truth be affirmed that, by the many inestimable benefits which have resulted from the application of science to our every-day wants, human life has gained in duration, and its pleasures have been increased a thousandfold. Of these benefits, not the least important, in utility and convenience, is the common lucifer-match.

The old methods of obtaining light were very clumsy and uncertain, compared with it. The earliest recorded plan was that of rubbing together two pieces of dry wood, such as laurel and ivy. That was followed by the 'flint and steel,' a method which remained in general use in this country till about thirty-five years ago. The plain splint dipped in sulphur is also an old invention, and may be viewed as the original form of the lucifer-match.

Previous to the introduction of the lucifer-match in 1833, various kinds of chemical matches were tried, but with little success, owing to their expense, and the danger attending their use. The 'Euphyrion,' 'Promethean,' and 'friction' matches were the most important of these early attempts. The Euphyrion consisted of a splint of wood dipped in sulphur, and afterwards tipped with a paste containing chlorate of potash, colophony, and gum. When a light was desired, it was dipped into a little sulphuric acid in a bottle, and rapidly withdrawn, when the chlorate of potash, owing to the strong chemical action which ensues between it and the acid, burst into flame, and set fire to the wood. This match was introduced in 1807, and was sold for one shilling per box. The Promethean match was invented in 1828, and was a modification of the Euphyrion. It consisted of a roll of gummed paper, containing at the one end a mixture of chlorate of potash and gum, and a small glass bulb filled with sulphuric acid, and was ignited by breaking the bulb with a pair of pliers, and allowing the chlorate of potash and acid to come into contact. The friction-match was first made in 1832, and resembled the Euphyrion in every respect, with the exception that the paste with which it was tipped contained the additional ingredient of sulphide of antimony, and instead of being dipped in acid to cause ignition, it was merely rubbed firmly between glass-paper.

A year afterwards, phosphorus was introduced into the match composition, and lucifer-matches were manufactured for the first time, although in a much less perfect form than at present. It is remarkable that phosphorus was not thought of before that period for the purpose of match-making, as it was discovered so far back as the year 1669, and its peculiar property of being easily ignited by friction was known soon afterwards. When phosphorus was discovered, it was regarded merely as a chemical curiosity, and was sold for four guineas an ounce; now, however, it has become an article of commerce, and may be bought for less than half-a-crown per pound.

In a lucifer-match manufactory, the first department you enter is that in which the wood is cut into splints. Each plank is sawn into thirty blocks, and these, by means of lancets set in a frame

which is worked by steam, are cut into splints four and a half inches long. One frame may readily produce from two to three millions of splints per day. The splints are next collected into bundles, and dried by exposure in an oven to the temperature of 300 degrees Fahrenheit. They are then conveyed to the sulphur-house, where both ends of each bundle are dipped in melted sulphur. The next and last process is called 'dipping,' and consists in tipping the ends of the splints in the phosphorus mixture. The composition of this mixture differs according to the country in which the matches are to be consumed. Matches for use in moist climates, such as our own, contain less phosphorus than those for use in warm countries, as phosphorus, when it becomes moist, loses its property of combustion. A match composition for use in England should contain two parts of phosphorus, four parts of chlorate of potash, two parts of gum, three parts of powdered glass, and a little vermilion or other colouring matter.

The phosphorus is the most important ingredient in the match composition, as this it is which ignites when the match is subjected to friction, the combustion being conveyed to the wood by the chlorate of potash and sulphur. The gum is introduced for the purpose of making the mixture adhere, and also to protect the phosphorus from the action of the air. Matches which contain a considerable quantity of chlorate of potash make a snapping noise when ignited, while those which contain a small quantity of that substance make little noise, and require less friction for their ignition.

To return to the process of manufacture. The splints, after being sulphured, are conveyed to another room, in which are arranged plates of stone or iron, covered with the phosphorus composition to the depth of an eighth of an inch, and heated underneath by steam, for the purpose of keeping the mixture in a fluid state. The splints are dipped once, twice, or even oftener if necessary, then dried; and as both ends are tipped with the composition, they are next divided, each splint forming two matches. In some manufactories, the splints are divided before the composition is added. The matches, after being packed in boxes, are ready for the market.

The rapidity with which these various processes are gone through is truly astonishing, it being not unusual in large works to introduce the raw wood into the saw-mills in the morning, and a few hours afterwards, to ship it in the form of lucifer-matches.

The manufacture of matches is one attended with considerable danger, owing to the very inflammable nature of the materials used; and those operatives engaged in tipping the splints with the composition, are liable to be attacked by a very distressing disease in the lower jaw, caused by the fumes of the phosphorus. This evil, however, may be avoided by the use of amorphous phosphorus, a modification of the ordinary kind, which is quite innocuous and destitute of odour.

Another improvement in this industry was made recently in the substitution of paraffine for sulphur as the substance to convey combustion to the splint. The very noxious sulphurous fumes which the ordinary lucifer-match evolves when lighted, are thus done away with.

Many attempts have been made of late to reduce the liability of matches to ignite by accidental friction, as from this cause very serious calamities

have originated. An ingenious plan, devised by a continental manufacturer, reduces this risk to a minimum. It consists in dividing the match composition into two parts, placing the one on the end of the splint, and the other, containing the phosphorus, on the side of the box. By this means, the match will only ignite when rubbed against the box.

The statistics of the lucifer-match manufacture are very extraordinary. Austria, which is the great centre of this industry, exports about two thousand five hundred tons of matches annually. One maker sells one thousand four hundred matches for one farthing, another offers five thousand in boxes for fourpence. In France and Sweden also, the manufacture is very extensive. In this country, two hundred and fifty millions of matches are used *daily*, which is at the rate of eight per day for every individual. Of this enormous number, we only manufacture one-fifth, the other four-fifths being imported from the continent.

EVERLASTING FLOWERS.

I SEND thee but a simple gift,

A little bunch of dry, crisp flowers,
Still rainbow-coloured, though 'tis long
Since sunshine fed them, or the showers.

Mere phantoms of those thoughts of love
Whose flying seeds from Eden blew;
God's hand in pity sent them forth,
If Talmud legends are but true.

Dear, promise me that, when I'm dead,
You'll press within my clay-cold hand
The same bright everlasting flowers;
I'll bear them through the Silent Land.

I shall not need remembrances
Of thee, my own; but still I'll keep
These always with me through the dim,
Sad shadow of Death's long, long sleep.

Dark waters, in thy blackest gulf—
Dark valley, in thy ghastliest cleft,
I'll guard these flowers, the types of love,
Though nothing but these flowers be left.

Come flame and torture for my sins,
Or Mercy open the golden portal,
Still, still I'll grasp those changeless flowers,
To prove my boundless love immortal.

The Publishers of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL beg to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice:

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The Tale, LORD ULSWATER, will be finished at the end of July, and will be followed on Saturday, August 3d, by an ORIGINAL NOVEL, entitled

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

By the Author of 'LOST SIR MASSINGBEARD,' &c.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.